

What Does an Attorney Do!

Family Law - includes laws of marriage, civil unions, same-sex relationships, domestic partnerships, divorce, separation, property settlements, alimony, spousal abuse, adoption, child abuse, child support, child custody and kidnapping. If you need help with a family-related legal issue, a family law attorney can advise in family disputes as well as represent you in lawsuits.

Criminal Defense - If you are suspected of a crime or charged with a violation of law, you may require the services of a criminal defense attorney to present your defense or negotiate a penalty. As different rules and procedures exist for different offenses, you should seek a criminal defense attorney who has worked on your particular type of case to provide you with the best defense. An experienced criminal defense attorney knows what information the government will need to prove your guilt. The defense attorney will also know what information you need to prove your innocence, including whether there are any legal rules justifying your actions.

What is a Personal Injury Attorney – A personal injury lawyer works with clients who have suffered a physical or emotional injury, usually by accident or mistake. For example, if you are in a car accident or are the victim of a botched surgery, a personal injury attorney can help. They know how the insurance claim process works, they know what evidence to gather, and they know how to calculate and present a claim for damages. Many personal injury attorneys take cases on a contingency basis, which means they receive an agreed-upon percentage of the payment you receive, also called the personal injury settlement. If you don't recover any money, they don't get paid their fee. Personal injury lawyers also know how to defend you if someone thinks an injury is your fault.

Adoption - An adoption lawyer helps to place children with parents other than their birth parents. An adoption cuts off the birth parents' rights and responsibilities, and gives them to the adoptive parents. Once an adoption is final, the adopted child receives the same legal treatment as a biological child. Adoption is often an emotional time and an adoption lawyer can help you make the right decisions for the child.

Alimony - When an ex-spouse makes payments to a former spouse after the divorce, the payments are called alimony. Alimony payments (also called spousal support) are intended to preserve the lifestyle the former spouse enjoyed before the divorce. Unlike child support, which is a required payment to fund a child's necessities, no one is guaranteed alimony. If a couple can't agree, a judge decides whether to award alimony. A divorce lawyer who specializes in alimony knows what information you need to calculate alimony, and can also help if you feel your ex-spouse is asking for too much alimony.

Birth Injury - If you have a child you suspect suffers from a birth injury or birth defect but you are not sure when the injury happened or who is at fault, you may benefit from the services of a birth injury lawyer. A birth injury lawyer handles cases where babies' injuries occur during pregnancy or birth, even when the problem does not appear until later. Examples of birth injuries are cerebral palsy, brachial plexus injury, brain damage, and broken bones. Birth injuries can also result from improper care during pregnancy. Birth injury lawyers know the medical factors causing these injuries, and the best medical experts for a particular case. Parents face difficult choices when a child is born with injuries, and a birth injury lawyer can help make these choices easier.

Brain Injury - Brain damage can be caused by many different factors which can be difficult to pinpoint, as symptoms do not always surface right away. Brain injury lawyers know the medical factors causing these injuries and the best medical experts for a particular case. Brain injury lawyers can help you understand the nature of the injury and how it occurred, and discover who is responsible. They know which insurance policies will pay for your losses and what you can expect to recover in damages if the injury was someone else's fault.

Car/Auto Accident - If you are involved in a car accident, you may benefit from the services of a car accident lawyer, one who knows the dynamics of car crashes and can identify and weigh all the possible factors which may have played a part. For example, you are driving in the rain on an improperly graded road and an approaching car has a blow-out. It suddenly veers out of control and skids into you at 45 mph. Was it the rain, the poorly built road, the other driver (found with beer cans in the car), or the mechanic who installed the bad tire that caused the accident—or a

combination of them all? A car accident lawyer discovers who is responsible, whether insurance policies will pay for your losses, and what you can expect to recover in damages if the accident was someone else's fault.

Child Abuse - A child abuse lawyer understands issues related to child abuse and neglect, and child physical or emotional abuse claims can arise in a variety of contexts and motives. Sometimes the young victim tells a relative, who then files a lawsuit; at other times, a government agency such as Child Protective Services may press charges. Because of the victims' tender age, abuse cases frequently are complicated. You may seek a child abuse lawyer whether you have been accused of child abuse, or if you're seeking to file a lawsuit on the victim's behalf.

Child Support - If you are a parent and you divorce, the parent the child lives with often receives money (child support) from the parent no longer living with the child. Unlike alimony, which is paid to maintain an ex-spouse's lifestyle, child support pays for the child's physical, emotional, and educational needs. A child support lawyer can help parents negotiate and calculate child support, either by agreement or in court. While national guidelines to calculate child support amounts exist, you or the judge may choose to calculate the amount based on your income and the child's needs. A child support lawyer can be useful during negotiations to help objectively determine the most appropriate amount of child support for your situation.

Defective/Dangerous Products - When you are injured by a poorly designed or poorly made product, or by a product that should have carried a warning label, you may benefit from the services of a defective and dangerous products lawyer. Many drugs, including the arthritis drug Vioxx and diet aids containing Phenylpropanolamine, are considered dangerous products, as are some medical devices (heart defibrillators) and ordinary appliances (space heaters). Asbestos and tobacco are also considered inherently dangerous. A defective and dangerous products lawyer discovers how and why a product was defective, whether insurance policies will pay for your losses, and what you can expect to recover in damages.

Divorce/Separation - A divorce lawyer helps you if you no longer want to be married. Whether you want a legal separation or the marriage ended, divorce lawyers assist you to arrange financial and family matters, typically in a negotiation with your spouse's lawyer. Alimony, child custody, child support, and a fair division of community assets (like who keeps the house or how your checking and savings accounts are divided) are matters that a divorce lawyer is trained to help determine.

Domestic Violence - If you feel physically or mentally threatened by someone close to you (such as a family member, boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, or partner), you may contact an experienced domestic violence lawyer to learn more about available helpful resources. Domestic violence lawyers can argue your case in court, refer you to counseling and shelter facilities, and file restraining orders to protect you. Domestic violence lawyers can also defend you against false accusations of domestic violence.

DUI/DWI - If you are suspected of driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, you may be arrested for DUI (driving under the influence). Depending on the state, the specific crime is also called DWI (driving while intoxicated), OUI (operating under the influence), or OWI (operating while intoxicated). A DUI conviction has serious consequences (for example, losing your driving privileges); but an experienced DUI attorney can often get the charges dropped or reduced, or may be able to negotiate lesser penalties depending on your circumstances and your past history.

Identity Theft - When someone else uses your name without your consent, you are the victim of identity theft and may benefit from the services of an identity theft attorney. There are many types of identity theft: financial identity theft occurs when someone uses your name and social security number to make purchases; criminal identity theft occurs when someone gets arrested and gives your name as theirs; identity cloning occurs when someone pretends to be you; and commercial identity theft occurs when someone uses your business' name and reputation to get credit. Identity theft is not always easy to detect, nor is it easy to stop. An identity theft fraud lawyer will recognize the signs when a theft has taken place, and know best how to help you get your identity back.

Insurance - Insurance law covers the policies insurance companies can offer and the rates they can charge. Because there are so many different kinds of insurance, a good insurance lawyer is very helpful. Personal insurance standards include auto insurance, health insurance, homeowners insurance, life insurance, and disability insurance. Business

insurance standards usually include commercial liability insurance, errors and omissions insurance, malpractice insurance, and business interruption insurance. Each of these policies covers losses from different types of risk, and both the losses and the risks are carefully defined. It can take an insurance lawyer just to determine if your loss resulted from a risk you were insured for. Sometimes insurance companies will deny claims, acting in what is legally called bad faith. Insurance lawyers can determine if your insurer is treating you fairly and sue for you if the company is acting in bad faith.

Insurance Fraud - Insurance fraud occurs when someone lies about an injury or loss to collect money from an insurance company. If you are accused of making a false insurance claim, you want to contact an insurance fraud lawyer. For example, if you make a claim for physical therapy treatments for a bad back and your insurance company first pays for the therapy, but then claims you never had the treatments, you may need to talk to a medical insurance fraud attorney. Likewise, if another driver totals your car but your insurance company insists the accident was your fault, you need to talk with an auto insurance fraud lawyer.

Juvenile - Juvenile law applies to young children and teenagers, usually defined as less than eighteen years old, depending on the state. Minors accused of breaking the law are processed under a juvenile justice system. This system is completely separate from the one used for adults, and the penalties involved are usually far less severe than in the adult system. Juvenile law also carries certain protections that do not apply to adults; for example, names are kept confidential and parents can be present during police questioning. A lawyer who specializes in juvenile law will help minors understand the juvenile justice system and present their defense in juvenile court.

Landlord Tenant - Landlord tenant law concerns landlord and tenants' rights and responsibilities. Because the apartment you rent is your own personal space, the law places many limits on landlords' activities. For example, if a landlord tries to make you move without giving you enough notice, or ignores a rat infestation in your apartment, a landlord / tenant lawyer knows what options you have as a tenant. On the other hand, a landlord / tenant lawyer also helps landlords who have tenants breaking rules, such as moving out three months early or refusing to pay rent. Tenant eviction laws are very specific, with different rules in each city. If you are being evicted or if you have a tenant you want to evict, you may benefit from the services of a landlord / tenant lawyer.

Lawsuits/Disputes - If you make a big purchase and later decide you to return the item, what can you do if the store refuses to refund your money? You can file a lawsuit and proceed with litigation, but the process can be costly and time-consuming. The law provides several other methods to resolve disputes and all offer unique advantages. A lawyer who specializes in disputes reviews your paperwork and tells you what method will best serve your needs and budget.

Libel/Slander - Libel and slander are forms of defamation. Defamation is when someone intentionally lies about you and harms your reputation. Libel is written defamation and slander is spoken defamation. Lawyers who specialize in libel lawsuits and slander lawsuits know how to spot lies, and know the information you will need to prove the liar intended to hurt you. While our freedom of speech rights can make defamation difficult to prove, libel and slander lawyers can help you with these cases. They can also defend you if you've been wrongfully accused of lying about someone.

Litigation - If you have issues with someone and want to sue, you will need a litigation lawyer. Litigation lawyers specialize in the litigation process and understand all of the ins and outs of the courtroom. A litigation lawyer can also help you decide whether your case is appropriate for a lawsuit, or if it might be better handled through the mediation or arbitration process. The litigation lawyer will research the facts that caused the dispute, and analyze them to identify the appropriate law and how it applies. After this preliminary review, the litigation lawyer gives you an analysis of your rights and an estimate of your ability to be successful in court. The litigation lawyer will know the information you need to present in court as well as the process, procedures, and deadlines you must meet to keep your lawsuit on track.

Marriage/Prenuptials - When you marry, you enter a relationship contract with your spouse that entitles you as a couple to certain legal rights and responsibilities. Family lawyers specializing in marriage can write prenuptial agreements for a couple before marriage. A prenuptial agreement can be especially important if you have financial interests you've accrued earlier in life and wish to clarify how they will or won't be shared with your new spouse. A

written prenuptial agreement sets out the financial expectations of your marriage and anticipates what will happen to your assets should you divorce. The process for creating an airtight prenuptial agreement can be complicated, and a lawyer with a marriage and prenuptial practice can make sure the agreement is properly written.

Mediation - The mediation process can help you resolve disputes without going to court. In a mediation proceeding, a neutral third party (a mediation lawyer or mediator) meets with you and the person you disagree with. Mediators are trained to find mediation solutions in legal disputes, including divorce mediation and business disagreement mediation. The mediator acts as a facilitator, helping you negotiate until a solution is found. Mediation is the most informal process for dispute resolution and is usually the least expensive method. The drawback is that, unlike an arbitrator in arbitration, the mediator does not make a final decision. So, unless the parties agree and enter into a settlement agreement, the mediation can end without the dispute being solved.

Medical Malpractice - Everyone makes mistakes. But when doctors, nurses, therapists, or dentists make them, the effects can last a lifetime. Patients have a right to expect that medical procedures will be properly performed. Medical malpractice attorneys represent you if you are injured by a healthcare provider's careless or accidental mistakes. For example, if a doctor leaves behind gauze in your body during surgery, resulting in an infected wound that requires even more surgery, the doctor committed medical malpractice. Medical malpractice attorneys can recognize injuries caused by mistakes; they know the most common mistakes that cause injuries, and they know how to find and present information useful to prove your case. Medical malpractice attorneys also know how much insurance is available if the health care provider is responsible for what happened to you.

Motorcycle Accident - If you are involved in a motorcycle accident, you may benefit from the services of a motorcycle accident lawyer, one who knows the dynamics of motorcycle crashes and can identify and weigh all the possible factors that may have played a part in your accident. A motorcycle accident lawyer will discover who is responsible, whether insurance policies will pay for your losses, and what you can expect to recover in damages if the injury was someone else's fault. Since motorcycles have a far higher rate of serious and fatal accidents than cars or trucks, your lawyer's knowledge can be critical to getting enough money to compensate you for your loss.

Nursing Home Abuse/Neglect - Nursing home abuse lawyers work with nursing home residents and their families. Nursing home residents depend on the nursing home staff to assist with their daily needs, as well as treat them for physical or medical conditions. Because residents are so vulnerable, abuse can take many forms. Staff can give residents too many drugs or the wrong ones, deprive them of heat or food, or simply pay insufficient attention to their needs. Nursing home abuse lawyers recognize when a resident has been mistreated, even if the resident isn't aware or able to communicate it. Nursing home abuse lawyers know which social service agencies to contact to report abuse, and can have a court-appointed guardian make decisions in the resident's best interests. If a nursing home resident's condition causes you concern, nursing home abuse lawyers can advise you on how to proceed.

Power of Attorney - A power of attorney is a document you sign to give someone else the right to make legal decisions for you. Unlike a guardianship, you determine the decision makers' authority by the language used in the power of attorney form; you can limit it to health matters, financial issues, or any combination of powers that suits your needs. For example, if you are having heart surgery, you might consider appointing a family member with power of attorney over your health care, in case decisions need to be made and you aren't able to make them. Lawyers with expertise drafting power of attorney forms make sure the decision-making authority you are giving someone matches what you have in mind.

Probate - Probate is the legal process used to carry out a person's will after their death; a probate attorney advises you on how to perform the steps in the process. In general, once you have identified and collected the dead person's belongings, including their money, property, and other assets, you pay the person's debts and taxes. Once all debts have been paid, you distribute their money and property according to the language of the will. If there is no will, the laws of the state where the dead person lived control how the property is distributed. A probate attorney helps you plan what happens to your property when you die, as they can probate wills and act as your probate court estate representative. A probate attorney also represents family members and beneficiaries wishing to challenge wills.

Sexual Harassment - If another person has made you feel unsafe or uncomfortable because they've acted in a sexual way in your presence, then you may benefit from the services of a sexual harassment attorney. Sexual harassment

can take place anywhere: in public, at school, at work, or even at home. For example, you may feel you were fired for refusing to go on a date with your boss, or had a teacher or manager touch you inappropriately at school or work. Sexual harassment attorneys can help you understand your rights as well as what actions you can take in these situations.

Slip and Fall Accidents - If you slip and fall on ice cubes from a spilled drink in a restaurant and break your leg, you may require the services of a slip and fall lawyer. Slip and fall accident injuries are usually the result of someone else's carelessness, mistake, or failure to act. In the example above, the restaurant servers should have cleaned up the mess to prevent the accident. A slip and fall accident lawyer will know who to contact and how to negotiate to recover money for your medical expenses, any lost wages, and your pain and suffering.

Speeding/Traffic Ticket - If the police give you a ticket for violating traffic laws (quite often for speeding), you may require the services of a traffic ticket lawyer (sometimes called a speeding ticket lawyer) to help you through traffic court. Traffic ticket lawyers know which people to talk to at court and the kind of deals they are willing to make. The traffic ticket lawyer will also know the specific types of proof the officer must submit to the court and when there is not enough information to support the traffic ticket.

Trucking Accident - If you are involved in a trucking accident, you may benefit from the services of a trucking accident lawyer. Trucking accident lawyers know the dynamics of truck crashes and can identify and weigh all the possible factors which may have been involved. Tired truckers falling asleep at the wheel can cause trucking accidents, as can car drivers who abruptly change lanes without signaling. Unfortunately, truck accidents can easily start a chain reaction. A trucking accident lawyer will discover who is responsible, whether insurance policies will pay for your losses, and what you can expect to recover in damages if the accident was someone else's fault.

Uncontested Divorce - When you and your spouse agree that you no longer want to be married, an uncontested divorce lawyer can help you. In an uncontested divorce, you both agree to end the marriage and divide your assets without involving a judge. A lawyer with an uncontested divorce practice knows what information is needed to legally terminate a marriage and can provide guidance to ensure that the divorce is final.

Violent Crime - A violent crime occurs when a person uses (or threatens to use) violence to harm another person, including rape, assault, and murder. The penalties for violent crimes are stiff; conviction almost always carries substantial jail time. If you are accused of a violent crime, you need an attorney with experience defending others in that particular crime, one who will understand how to best defend you based on your facts and circumstances. Sometimes the government will offer a "plea bargain," meaning they will drop or lower the charges if you agree to a lesser crime. A violent crime lawyer will be able to evaluate the government's case and the terms of the bargain to suggest how to proceed in your best interests.

White Collar Crime - White collar crime defines a criminal activity committed without using violence. Examples include insider trading, insurance fraud, tax fraud, securities and investment fraud, and identity theft. If you are accused of committing a white collar crime, you need a white collar criminal defense lawyer familiar with the government's style of negotiating and trying white collar crimes. Specifically, you should hire a white collar criminal lawyer with enough knowledge about the particular charges to analyze your situation and to identify the best defense for your case.

Worker's Compensation - If you are an employee who has been injured or disabled on the job, you may require the services of a workers' compensation lawyer. Usually administered at the state level, workers' compensation can include weekly wage payments, money for financial losses due to the injury, paid medical expenses, and money for pain and suffering. If an employee is killed on the job, then his family can receive the workers' compensation. Workers' compensation lawyers interpret workers' compensation laws and can help if you have a job-related injury.

Wrongful Death - Wrongful death lawyers handle cases where someone is killed, whether the person who caused the death meant to do it or not. If a loved one dies because of someone else's actions, a wrongful death lawyer can help you understand what happened, who is responsible, whether you deserve any compensation for losing your loved one, and whether anyone should be charged with a crime.

Wills/Living Wills - A written will lets you decide what happens to your money and property after you die, while a living will lets you decide whether or not you wish to be placed on a medical life support system if you become disabled or incapacitated. Wills attorneys and living wills attorneys know all of the language that must be included in your will documents so that things happen the way you want. Because it's impossible for anyone to explain a will after his or her death, it is very important that the will meets all legal requirements. A wills attorney will ensure it does.